

2011 - 2012 Statement of Legislative Intent

Approved

Tab	Action	Option	Version
33	1	A	3

Budget Action Title: Planning for Potential 2012 Library Levy

Councilmembers: Bagshaw; Conlin; Godden; O'Brien

Staff Analyst: Sara Belz; Patricia Lee

Budget Committee Vote:

Date	Result	SB	BH	SC	TR	JG	NL	RC	TB	MO
11/10/2010	Pass 9-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Statement of Legislative Intent:

The Council requests that the City Librarian work with the Library Board, the Executive, the City Attorney's office and Council staff in 2011 to develop a potential Library Levy to provide ongoing funding for a portion of The Seattle Public Library's (SPL) budget. The anticipated date of a potential Library Levy is 2012, with funding available in 2013.

The City Librarian is requested to submit the following:

- by the end of first quarter 2011, a proposed workplan for developing a Library Levy and a timeline that displays the annual levy amounts for all existing and proposed City levies for the full term of each levy;
- by the end of second quarter 2011, a proposed public engagement strategy for developing a Library Levy; and
- by the end of 2011, a proposal for a Library Levy that would fund a portion of SPL's budget in place of current General Subfund support, and restore and expand support to achieve a more optimum level of library services.

The public engagement strategy may include the creation of a citizens advisory committee and/or public hearings. The proposal should include at least two Levy options that would provide SPL with different levels of funding.

Background:

SPL's heavy reliance on the General Subfund makes it particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in City revenues. Over the past two years, this vulnerability has grown increasingly apparent as competing pressures on the General Subfund have resulted in decreased operating hours at branch libraries and reductions to SPL's collections budget. As part of the 2010 budget process, the Council adopted a Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI 95-1-A-1) that called on the City Librarian to work with the Library Board, the Executive, the City Attorney's Office, and Council staff to explore potential new sources of ongoing revenue for SPL. In July 2010, the Council's Regional Development and Sustainability Committee was briefed on the results of this work and the Council moved to file Clerk File 310921, which contains SPL's formal response to the SLI.

After reviewing the financing options described in the City Librarian's SLI response, the Regional Development and Sustainability Committee expressed particular interest in using a voter-approved Library Levy to support a portion of SPL's budget on an ongoing basis.

The City's annual regular levy typically results in a rate that is less than its total statutory authority of \$3.60 per \$1,000 of assessed value. While there may be competing priorities for the City's unused levy capacity, at this time there is capacity to add a Library Levy. In 2011 and 2012, General Subfund support for SPL will be around \$50 million per year. It is anticipated a Levy would provide a portion, but not all, of that amount in 2013 and beyond.

Responsible Council Committee(s): Regional Development & Sustainability

Date Due to Council: Workplan and timeline by March 30, 2011

Public Engagement Strategy by June 30, 2011

Library Levy Proposal by December 30, 2011